



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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State orders utility to address more piping systems at coal ash dams

RALEIGH – State officials are again ordering Duke Energy to address the piping systems in coal ash dams at three of the utility's power plants.

The N.C. Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources on Wednesday issued a notice of deficiency letter to Duke Energy for leaks the state agency found in the piping system at the utility's Weatherspoon Steam Station in Lumberton. The state discovered numerous gushers, drips and stains in the pipes while inspecting video the agency ordered the utility to provide after a ruptured pipe caused a coal ash spill Feb. 2 at the utility's Dan River facility in Eden.

The state could take enforcement action, including fining the utility up to \$500 a day per violation, if Duke Energy does not provide a schedule for repairing the pipes at the Weatherspoon plant by July 20.

The state agency has also sent the utility letters this week that require the company to provide the state with an engineer's assessment for the piping systems in the coal ash dams at the Sutton Steam Station in Wilmington and the Asheville Steam Station. No major leaks were discovered in the pipes at either Sutton or Asheville, but the inspection letters require Duke Energy to complete a more thorough engineering analysis of the piping systems because portions of the video were distorted or sections of the pipes were not visible.

Earlier this week, the Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources announced that it had ordered Duke Energy to submit repair plans for leaking pipes at coal ash impoundment dams at five other power plants in the Charlotte area and western North Carolina. The state agency is also calling on the utility company to provide engineering assessments for aging pipes at three of those plants.

None of the leaks has been identified as posing an imminent threat to the structural integrity of any of the dams, said Tracy Davis, director of the Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources.

Copies of all the notices of deficiency and inspection letters can be found on the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Dan River Spill webpage, <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/dan-river-spill>, under the "Dam Safety" heading. Video from the pipe inspections will be made available on the website later.

The infrastructure to be repaired includes concrete and corrugated metal piping components used to treat and carry wastewater from the coal ash impoundments to discharge points.

State engineers are continuing to review video of other pipes in dams at coal ash impoundments, and could issue further notices if conditions warrant.

The state's probe of the coal ash impoundment dams is part of an ongoing investigation the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been conducting of all 33 coal ash impoundments since the Feb. 2 coal ash spill.

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